

Standard 5-5: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the social, economic, and political events that influenced the United States during the Cold War era.

5.5.4 Explain the course of the Cold War, including differing economic and political philosophies of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the United States, the spread of Communism, McCarthyism, the Korean Conflict, the Berlin Wall, the space race, the Cuban missile crisis, and the Vietnam War. (P, G, E, H)

Taxonomy Level: 2.7-B Understand Conceptual Knowledge

Previous/future knowledge:

All concepts associated with the Cold War are new for 5th grade students.

In 7th grade, students will summarize the events of the Cold War, including the Soviet domination of Eastern Europe; the rise of the Communist party in China; the building of the Berlin wall; the economic and political competition for influence in Vietnam and Korea; the Cuban missile crisis; the revolutionary movements in Africa; the development of new military, nuclear, and space technology; and the threat of nuclear annihilation (7-6.2)

In Global Studies, students will summarize the ideologies and global effects of Communism and Democracy, including the effects of totalitarianism and Communism in China and the effects of Communism in Eastern Europe and Soviet Union. (GS 6.1) Students will also summarize the worldwide effects of the Cold War, including the competition for power between the United States and the Soviet Union, the changing relationships between the Soviet Union and China, the response by popular culture, and the collapse of the communist states. (GS 6.2).

In United States History, students will Summarize the origins and course of the Cold War, including the containment policy; the conflicts in Korea, Africa, and the Middle East; the Berlin Airlift and the Berlin Wall; the Bay of Pigs and Cuban missile crisis; the nuclear arms race; the effects of the “Red Scare” and McCarthyism; and the role of military alliances. (USHC-9.2)

It is essential for students to know:

Students should be able to **explain the course of the Cold War**. A rivalry developed between the **Soviet Union and the United States** following World War II. The Soviet Union’s goal was to **spread communism**, their political and economic system in which the government owns and controls businesses and property. The goal of the United States was to contain the spread of communism and so United States’ policy throughout the Cold War period was known as the containment policy. The United States and other western European nations wanted to encourage democratic governments throughout the world that were based on personal freedoms and an economic free enterprise system. Communism and those who supported its ideals were increasingly feared by many Americans.

This fear was fueled by Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy, who announced that hundreds of communists were working in the United States government with the intent of overturning the government. This Red Scare came to be called **McCarthyism**. The McCarthy era is known for the fear and sensationalism promoted by Senator McCarthy and the mass media. No secret agents were ever uncovered by McCarthy’s accusations and investigations.

In 1950, the **Korean Conflict** started when North Korea’s communist government invaded South Korea with the intention of reuniting the peninsula under one communist government. South Korea did not want to become a communist nation. As a result, the United States, with the sanction of the United Nations,

responded by sending American soldiers to defend South Korea and contain the spread of communism. However, the war ended in a stalemate and the peninsula remained divided. South Korea remained a democratic nation. North Korea remained a communist nation allied with the Soviet Union.

The **Berlin Wall** was built by the Soviets to separate the communist and democratic portions of Berlin, which had been divided between the allies at the end of World War II. People were forbidden to cross to the western side. The Berlin Wall became a symbol of the differences between the Soviet Union and the western democracies. It was finally torn down in 1989, signifying the collapse of the communist control of Eastern Europe and an end of the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States.

The competition between the Soviet Union and the United States continued into a quest to reach outer space. The **space race** was started when the Soviet Union successfully launched an unmanned satellite, *Sputnik*. This event highlighted the need for an excellent education system and was a unifying force for American industry. It also promoted the development of computer technologies that would affect other segments of American life. President Kennedy established the goal of landing a man on the moon by the end of the 1960s. Although the Soviet Union was first to put a man into outer space, the United States was first to put a man (Neil Armstrong) on the moon.

During the **Cuban Missile Crisis**, the Cold War rivalry came close to nuclear war as the Soviet Union began shipping nuclear missiles to Cuba, a communist country 90 miles south of Florida. From this location, the Soviet Union could easily launch nuclear weapons toward targets in the United States. President Kennedy responded by setting up a naval blockade of Cuba preventing the Soviet Union from bringing weapons to Cuba. For several days, it appeared that the two nations would soon be at war. At the last moment, the ships carrying the nuclear missiles turned back. Most historians agree that this was the closest the United States and the Soviet Union ever came to war. As a result, efforts were made to avoid such a crisis in the future including the installation of the hot line and the signing of the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

The **Vietnam War** shares many similarities with the **Korean Conflict**. In both places the United States was trying to contain the spread of communism. As in Korea, the Soviet Union supported the communist government of the North and the United States supported the democratic government of the South. However, unlike in Korea, the war in Vietnam started because the government of South Vietnam refused to comply with a peace agreement that had been signed calling for elections to reunite the country. The government of South Vietnam feared that they would lose the election because the leader of North Vietnam was very popular. Fighting continued for many years and ended in U.S. withdrawal rather than stalemate. The United States faced a difficult challenge fighting in a jungle-like environment. Public sentiment began to grow against Americans fighting in Vietnam because the war was widely covered on television. After several rounds of peace talks, a cease-fire agreement was signed and American soldiers evacuated Vietnam. South Vietnam continued to fight the communists but soon surrendered and united with North Vietnam as a communist nation.

It is not essential for students to know:

Students do not need to know the names of the leaders of the Soviet Union during the period of the Cold War. Although helpful for the discussion of this period, students are not required to recall the American presidents that dealt with each of the specified events contained in this indicator. The specific names of battles fought during the Korean War and Vietnam Conflict are not critical. The specific names of spacecraft utilized by the Soviet Union or the United States are not required. It is not essential for students to know about the Berlin Airlift or the Bay of Pigs.

Assessment guidelines:

Appropriate assessments would require students to **explain** the course of the Cold War; therefore, the primary focus of assessment should be to **compare** the differing economic and political philosophies of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the United States. They should be able to **explain** the cause and effect relationship between the events of the Cold War including McCarthyism, the Korean Conflict, the Berlin Wall, the space race, the Cuban missile crisis, and the Vietnam War. Students should also be able to **compare** the Korean War and the Vietnam War.